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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

22 September 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Major General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., USA  
Deputy Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Targetting Suggestions

1. Pursuing our recently commissioned endeavor, I asked one of my senior associates to take a quiet, private re-look at the targetting problem. His thoughts are appended hereto in a memorandum he wrote personally for me and which, for security reasons, no one else has seen. For the same reasons, I have not had it edited or re-typed but, instead am forwarding it exactly as received.

2. The gentleman in question is [redacted] the head of the Indochina Division in our Office of Economic Research, which is charged with keeping our book on North Vietnam's economy, manpower, logistics and all cognate matters. (Norm is, I think, well and favorably known to Dr. Kissinger; he has accompanied the Director and me to WSAG meetings where logistics matters or studies were agenda items for discussion.) His attached note is, in essence, an extension of and should be considered in conjunction with our two memoranda of 22 August,\* both of which were prepared under his aegis.

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3. In reading the attached analysis, please bear in mind that it is not crisply focused on our precise concern, hence it will have to be read with a kind of corrective filter or lens. The treatment given Dong

\*Modifications Which Might Enhance The Impact Of The U.S. Interdiction Program Against North Vietnam, TS No. 203097/a/72 and An Assessment of the US Bombing and Mining Campaign in North Vietnam, TS No. 203097/72-B.

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Dang on pages 4-5 illustrates the point here involved. I asked Norm to assess potential targets for an intensified and generally unrestricted bombing effort, making no reference to any such program's duration or when it might be initiated. Norm's point is that an attack on Dong Dang (which the North Vietnamese almost certainly now believe is "off limits") would catch the North Vietnamese by surprise and throw a big wrench into the gears of the logistic system they are currently using. Norm's cautionary remarks are not intended to downgrade Dong Dang as a viable target, even though they might be read as such. Instead, he is simply warning that, in time, the North Vietnamese could probably make compensating adjustments. If I correctly understand the President's wishes, however, the President wants us to outline a sharp, surge action program which, if successful, would be of relatively short duration (almost by definition). Thus Norm's caveats (the one on Dong Dang is but one example) derive from his perception of the problem (which by design is limited and a trifle off the mark). These caveats would not necessarily carry the same weight under our perception of the problem, which is somewhat different.

4. One matter not directly addressed in the attached note is the general question of attacking population centers. This is probably a subject our group should address frontally, even if our considered recommendation proves to be negative. My own views on hitting urban centers as targets per se are decidedly negative -- on grounds of political impact and pragmatic practicality, not to mention morality. (In Tallyrand's words: "C'est plus qu'une crime, c'est une faute.") Terror bombing, or anything that could be persuasively described as such, is likely to yield a counter-productive stiffening of North Vietnamese will and have the net effect of enhancing the regime's position. It is also certain to generate political and propaganda problems for the U.S. around the world and in the United States, problems that would not be offset by compensating advantages within North Vietnam.

5. Selective attacks on particular, specific targets that happen to be located in urban areas is another matter entirely. These might include such things as the Hanoi railroad station and classification yard, the Hanoi thermal power plant, key communications facilities and the offices of major DRV government or party components. Sensible, serious recommendations with respect to such targets would require staff work and homework that to my knowledge has not yet been done. First, we would have to have an accurate assessment of the true CEP of the weapons systems to be employed (e.g., "smart bombs") -- and I mean a realistic assessment of probable CEP in a flack-filled, hectic Hanoi combat environment, not a theoretical estimate derived from level flight tests at optimum

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altitudes performed undisturbed under a cloudless Arizona sky. Secondly we would have to assess each putative urban target -- in light of these realistic CEP estimates -- with respect to what was in immediate or near proximity to it: detention facilities in which U.S. prisoners are known to be or even might possibly be housed, hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc. I have already initiated quiet survey work on the latter, but for obvious reasons your office is in the best position to get the kind of CEP data that will be required.

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6. Finally, it would probably be useful if you were to adopt a code-name for our exercise which could be used on all written material relating thereto. [redacted] suggest themselves for consideration. If you want the connotations to be less obvious, you might consider [redacted] - which to some would suggest a frisky young stallion but to us could privately echo a weapon our grandfathers dubbed the "peacemaker."

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[redacted]  
George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment  
TS No. 203099/72/a

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